

Wycombe's zip rocks Ashford

Wycombe W 0 Ashford T 0

DOUR displays by defences which gave nothing away, dominated this thrill-packed amateur v. professional F.A. Cup clash at High Wycombe.

The replay will be under flood-lights at Ashford next Wednesday (kick-off 7 p.m.).

After a shaky start, it was the Isthmian League amateurs Wycombe who generally kept the initiative, swinging the ball about with a brisk determination and understanding between halves and forwards which delighted the crowd of 5,200.

Both sides moved the ball well in approach play and in wing moves, but failed often to press home the attacks by over-eagerness against close marking defensive tactics.

The Southern League professionals, well served by the workman-like half-back trio of Peplow, Harris and Stevens, found the amateurs not only matched but later surpassed the bold, open play at breakneck pace by which they had dominated the first 15 minutes.

The Wycombe centre-half John Fisher, despite an injury, kept a close rein on centre-forward White, and after good work by the wingers Payne and Burden, the inside men Bean and Clayton, upset by Wycombe's quick tackling, were invariably too hurried with their marksmanship.

For Wycombe skipper Len Worley and Blair produced some sparkling moves on the right wing, and newcomer Horseman combined well with Hyde on the left.

As Wycombe launched a desperate bid for victory in the last 10 minutes, Harris came to Ashford's rescue when he headed a powerful drive from Blair off the goal line with Haydon beaten.

Wycombe gamble

WYCOMBE W. 0, ASHFORD 0

A GAMBLE in playing centre-half John Fisher with a strapped-up injured leg paid off for Wycombe.

He inspired them to outplay Ashford Town, and they could have won convincingly if nerves had not played their part.

Worst miss of the match found centre-forward Peter James with a clear pass to goal, but he fluffed it.

LATE BLAIR DRIVE SAVED ON LINE

Wycombe Wanderers 0 Ashford Town 0

THIS soccer thriller should go down in the annals of Wycombe Wanderers as the fatal fourteenth. Few results could have been so decisively decided by one incident. For after 14 minutes of cut-and-thrust cup tie football Wycombe centre-forward Peter James, facing an unattended goal, stubbed a toe into the Loakes Park turf and sent the ball trickling wide — the miss of the season, writes Angus.

As poor James looked round for a convenient hole to bury himself in 5,000 plus Wycombe fans stood transfixed with horror. Southern League professionals Ashford had other narrow squeaks—including a save on the goal line two minutes from time from Georgie Blair's drive—but this was the focal point of the F.A. Cup first round tie.

Ashford, not nearly so formidable as some of the professional opposition of the past, were on the receiving end for most of the game. So hard-pressed were they in the closing minutes that big John Harris and his co-defenders seemed to be trying to kick the ball into the distant Chilterns to buy precious time.

Home half-backs Dave Worley, John Fisher and Charlie Gale were the inspiration behind a spirited Wycombe performance which should have produced a clear cut win. Fisher, who passed a pre-match fitness test, before taking part was the real hero but for me Worley's lion-hearted play was one of the best things about this exciting, four game.

After a dangerous beginning—in which little left-winger Gordon Burden was a real worry to John Beck—Ashford were confined to breakaways by a confident Wycombe defence.

AMBITIOUS BLAIR

It was a thousand pities that the Wycombe attack could not benefit from the service they were being given by their halves. With James, having a meandering ineffective game, most of Wycombe's shots came from inside men Tony Horseman and Georgie Blair. Both distributed the ball delightfully. Twenty years old Horseman shows every indication of becoming a fine player, and the peppery little Blair fired in ambitious long range drives at every opportunity.

But most of the Wanderers' efforts came from way out. They were given little chance to get close to goal by big and unceremonious defenders. Even so, Wycombe had enough chances to have won comfortably.

Wingers Len Worley and Steve Hyde both had the beating of two tolerably pedestrian full-backs—Worley being particularly hard to check—and some goals should have come from this source of Ashford embarrassment.

Surprisingly, Wycombe seemed to finish better than the professionals. Encouraged by a roaring, cheering crowd, Wycombe made a great effort to snatch a late win and the dark head of pivot Harris saved a certain goal as Blair's fierce drive beat goalkeeper Haydon.